

Glossary of Lay Terms for use in Preparing Consent Forms for Human Subjects

(Adapted from the OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W

A

Abdominal: pertaining to body cavity below diaphragm which contains stomach, intestines, liver, and other organs.

Absorb: take up fluids, take in.

Acidosis: condition when blood contains more acid than normal.

Acuity: clearness, keenness, esp of vision - airways.

Acute: new, recent, sudden.

Adenopathy: swollen lymph nodes (glands).

Adjuvant: helpful, assisting, aiding.

Adjuvant Treatment: added treatment.

Antibiotic: drug that kills bacteria and other germs.

Antimicrobial: drug that kills bacteria and other germs.

Antiretroviral: drug that inhibits certain viruses.

Adverse Effect: negative side effect.

Allergic Reaction: rash, trouble breathing.

Ambulate: ability to walk.

Ambulation/Ambulatory: ability to walk.

Anaphylaxis: serious, potentially life threatening allergic reaction.

Anemia: decreased red blood cells; low red blood cell count.

Anesthetic (general): a drug or agent used to decrease the feeling of pain or eliminate the feeling of pain by putting you to sleep.

Anesthetic (local): a drug or agent used to decrease the feeling of pain or by numbing an area of your body, without putting you to sleep.

Angina: pain resulting from insufficient blood to the heart.

Angina Pectoris: same as above.

Anorexia: condition in which person will not eat; lack of appetite.

Antecubital: area inside the elbow.

Antibody: protein made in the body in response to foreign substance; attacks foreign substance and protects against infection.

Anticonvulsant: drug used to prevent seizures.

Antilipidemic: a drug that decreases the level of fat(s) in the blood.

Antitussive: a drug used to relieve coughing.

Arrhythmia: any change from the normal heartbeat (abnormal heartbeat).

Aspiration: fluid entering lungs.

Assay: lab test.

Assess: to learn about.

Asthma: a lung disease associated with tightening of the air passages.

Asymptomatic: without symptoms.

Axilla: armpit.

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B

Benign: not malignant, usually without serious consequences, but with some exceptions e.g. benign brain tumor may have, serious consequences.

BID: twice a day.

Binding/Bound: carried by, to make stick together, transported.

Bioavailability: the extent to which a drug or other substance becomes available to the body.

Blood profile: series of blood tests.

Bolus: an amount given all at once.

Bone Mass: the amount of [calcium in a give amount of] bone.

Bradyarrhythmias: slow irregular heart beat.

Bradycardia: slow heartbeat.

Bronchospasm: breathing distress caused by narrowing of the airways.

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C

Carcinogenic: capable of causing cancer.

Carcinoma: type of cancer.

Cardiac: pertains to the heart.

Cardioversion: restoration of normal heart beat by electric shock.

Catheter: a tube for withdrawing or introducing fluids.

Catheter-(indwelling epidural): a tube placed near the spinal cord used for anesthesia during operation.

Central Nervous System (cns): brain and spinal cord.

Cerebral trauma: damage to the brain.

Cessation: stopping.

CHD: coronary heart disease.

Chemotherapy: treatment of disease, usually cancer, by chemical agents.

Chronic: continuing for a long time.

Cisplatin: a drug used to kill cancer cells.

Clinical: pertaining to medical care.

Clinically Significant: of major importance for treating or evaluating patients.

Clinical trial: an experiment in patients.

Coma: unconscious state.

Complete response: total disappearance of disease.

Congenital: occurring prior to birth, due to parent's genetic input.

Conjunctivitis: irritation and redness of the thin membrane covering the eye.

Consolidation Phase: treatment phase intended to make a remission permanent, follows induction.

Controlled Trial: study in which the experimental treatment or procedure is compared to a standard (control) treatment or procedure.

Cooperative Group: association of multiple institutions to perform clinical trials.

Coronary: pertains to the blood vessels that supply the heart.

Ct (Cat) Scan computerized (axial) tomography: computerized series of x-rays culture test for infection or organisms that could cause infection.

Cumulative: total sum (of individual events, experiences, treatments).

Cutaneous: relating to the skin.

CVA cerebrovascular accident: stroke.

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D

Delegated Review: rapid review of a protocol by human subjects committee chair without full committee approval, permitted with certain low-risk research.

Dermatologic: pertaining to the skin.

Diastolic: lower number in blood pressure reading; pertaining to resting or relaxation phase of heart beat.

Distal: toward the end, away from the center of the body.

Diuretic: water pill or drug that causes increase in urination.

Doppler sound waves.

Double blind: study in which neither investigators nor subjects know what drug the subject is receiving.

Dysfunction: state of improper function.

Dysplasia: abnormal cells.

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E

Echocardiogram: sound wave test of the heart.

Edema: increased fluid.

EEG electroencephalogram: electric brainwave tracing.

Efficacy: effectiveness.

Electrocardiogram: electrical tracing of the heartbeat or heart rhythm (ECG or EKG).

Electrolyte Imbalance: imbalance of salts or chemicals in the blood.

Elevation of Liver Function Tests: evidence of liver or kidney damage.

Emesis: vomiting.

Empiric: based on experience.

Endoscopic Examination: examination of an internal part of the body with a lighted tube; looking at a part of the body with a lighted tube.

Enteral: by way of the intestines.

Epidural: outside the spinal cord.

Eradicating: getting rid of (such as a disease).

Evaluated assessed: examined for medical condition.

External: outside the body.

Extravasate: to leak outside of a blood vessel.

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F

Fibrillation: irregular beat of the heart or other muscle.

Fibrous: having many fibers, such as scar tissue.

FDA U S food and drug administration: the branch of federal government which approves new drugs.

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G

General Anesthesia: pain prevention by induction of drugged sleep, as in surgery.

Gestational: pertaining to pregnancy.

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H

Hematocrit: amount of red blood cells in the blood.

Hematoma: a bruise, a black and blue mark.

Hemodynamic: related to blood flow.

Hemolysis: breakdown in red blood cells.

Heparin Lock: needle placed in the arm with blood thinner to keep the blood from clotting inside the needle or tubing.

Hepatoma: cancer or tumor of the liver.

Heritable Disease: a disease which can be transmitted to one's offspring resulting in damage to future children.

Histopathologic: pertaining to the disease status of body tissues or cells.

Holter Monitor: a portable machine for recording heart beats.

Hypercalcemia: high blood calcium level.

Hyperkalemia: high blood potassium level.

Hypernatremia: high blood sodium level.

Hypertension: high blood pressure.

Hypocalcemia: low blood calcium level.

Hypokalemia: low blood potassium level.

Hyponatremia: low blood sodium level.

Hypotension: low blood pressure.

Hypoxia: low oxygen level in the blood.

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I

Iatrogenic: caused by a physician or by treatment.

IDE investigational device exemption: the license to test an unapproved new medical device.

Idiopathic: of unknown cause.

Immunoglobulin: a combination of antibodies from proteins in the blood.

Immunosuppressive: drug which suppresses the body's immune response used in transplantation and diseases caused by disordered immunity.

Immunotherapy: giving of drugs to help the body's immune (protective) system; usually used to destroy cancer cells.

Impaired function: abnormal function.

Implanted: placed in the body.

IND investigational new drug: the license to test an unapproved new drug.

Induction Phase: beginning phase or stage of a treatment.

Induration: hardening.

Indwelling: remaining in a given location, such as a catheter.

Infarct: death of tissue because of lack of blood supply.

Infectious Disease: disease which is transmitted from one person to next.

Inflammation: swelling which is generally painful, red, and warm.

Infusion: introduction of a substance into the body, usually into the blood.

Ingestion eating: taking by mouth.

Interferon: agent which acts against viruses; antiviral agent.

Intermittent: occurring (regularly or irregularly) between two time points; alternately ceasing and beginning.

Internal: within the body.

Interior: inside of the body.

Intramuscular: into the muscle; within the muscle.

Intraperitoneal: into the abdominal cavity.

Intrathecal: into the spinal fluid.

Intravenous (IV): into (within) a vein.

Intravesical: in the bladder.

Intubate: the placement of a tube into the airway.

Invasive Procedure: puncture, opening or cutting of the skin.

Investigational New drug (IND): a new drug which has not yet been approved by the FDA.

Investigational Method: a treatment method which has not been proven to be beneficial or has not been accepted as standard care.

Ischemia Procedure: decreased oxygen in a tissue (usually because of decreased blood flow).

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J

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L

Laparotomy: a procedure in which an incision is made in the abdominal wall to enable a physician to look at the organs.

Lethargy: sleepiness.

Leukopenia: low white blood cell count.

Lipid: fat.

Lipid profile (panel): fat and cholesterol levels in the blood.

Local Anesthesia: creation of insensitivity to pain in a small local area of the body.

Localized: restricted to one area; limited to one area (of the body).

Lumen: cavity of an organ or tube (e g Inside of blood vessel).

Lymphangiography: an x-ray of the lymph nodes or tissues after injection of dye in lymph vessels (e g in feet).

Lymphocyte: a type of white blood cell important in the body's defense against infection.

Lymphoma: a cancer of the lymph nodes (or tissues).

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M

Malaise: a vague feeling of bodily discomfort, feeling bad.

Malfunction: condition in which something is not functioning properly.

Malignancy: cancer or other progressively enlarging and spreading tumor, fatal if not successfully treated.

Medulloblastoma: type of brain tumor.

Metronidazole: a drug used to treat infections caused by parasites or other causes of anaerobic infections.

Metabolize: process of breaking down substances in the cells.

Metastasis: spread of cancer cells from one part of body to another.

MI myocardial infarction: heart attack.

Minimal: slight.

Minimize: reduce.

Monitor check on: keep track of; watch carefully.

Mobility ease of movement: ability to move around.

Morbidity: undesired result or complication; serious disease.

Mortality: death or death rate.

Motility: the ability to move.

MRI magnetic resonance imagin: body pictures created using magnetic rather than x-ray energy.

Myalgia: muscles aches.

Mucosa/Mucous Membrane: moist lining of digestive, respiratory, reproductive, and urinary tracts.

Myocardial: pertaining to the (muscle of the) heart.

M. Infarction: heart attack; death of heart muscle.

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N

Nasogastric Tube: tube from the nose to the stomach.

NCI National Cancer Institute.

Necrosis: death of tissue.

Neoplasia tumor: may be non-cancerous or cancerous.

Neuroblastoma: a cancer of nerve tissue.

Neurological: pertaining to the nervous system.

Neutropenia: decrease in the main part of the white blood cells.

NIH National Institutes of Health.

Non-Invasive: not breaking, cutting or entering the skin.

Nosocomial Pneumonia: pneumonia acquired in the hospital.

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O

Occlusion closing: obstruction.

Oncology: the study of tumors or cancer.

Ophthalmic: pertaining to the eye.

Optimal: best, most favorable or desirable.

OPRR Office of Protection from Research Risks of the NIH: oversees IRBs and related matters.

Oral Administration: given by mouth.

Orthopedic: pertaining to the bones.

Osteopetrosis: rare bone disorder characterized by dense bone.

Osteoporosis: bone disorder characterized by loss of bone leading to increased risk of fracture.

Ovaries: female sex glands; female organs which release eggs.

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P

Parenteral: administration by injection.

Patency: condition of being open.

Pathogenesis: the initial cause of a disease.

Percutaneous Perforation: through the skin puncture, tear or hole.

Peripheral: not central.

Per OS (PO): by mouth.

Pharmacokinetics: study of the way the body absorbs, distributes and gets rid of a drug.

Phase I: initial study of a new drug in humans to determine limits of tolerance.

Phase II: second phase of study of a new drug intended to obtain initial information.

Phase III: large scale trial to confirm and expand information on safety and usefulness of a new drug.

Phlebitis: irritation or inflammation of a vein.

Placebo: an inactive substance which may resemble an active agent but has no medical value.

Placebo Effect: symptom or change of condition seen when a placebo is given; not attributable to an active drug agent.

Platelets small particles in the blood that help with blood clotting.

Potential: possible.

Potentiate: increase or multiply the effect of a drug or toxin by administration of another drug or toxin at the same time.

Potentiator: an agent that helps another agent work better.

Prenatal: before birth.

Prophylaxis: a drug given to prevent disease or infection.

Prosthesis: artificial limbs, such as arms and legs.

PRN: as needed.

Prognosis outlook: probable outcomes.

Prone: lying on the stomach.

Prospective Study: study following patients forward in time.

Protocol: plan of study.

Proximal: closer to the center of the body, away from the end.

Pulmonary: pertaining to the lungs.

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Q

QD: every day, daily.

QID: four times a day.

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R

Radiation Therapy: x-ray or cobalt treatment.

Random: by chance.

Randomization: assignment of treatment group by chance, similar to tossing a coin (when there are two treatment choices).

RBC: red blood cell.

Recombinant: formation of new combinations of genes.

Reconstitution: putting back together the original parts or elements.

Recur: happen again.

Refractory: not responding to treatment.

Regeneration: regrowth of a structure or of lost tissue.

Regimen: pattern of administering treatment.

Relapse: the return or reappearance of a disease.

Remission: disappearance of evidence of cancer or other disease.

Renal: pertaining to the kidneys.

Replicable: capable of being duplicated.

Resect: remove or cut out (surgically).

Retrospective Study: study looking back over past experience.

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S

Sarcoma: a type of cancer.

Sedative: a drug to calm or make less anxious.

Seminoma: a type of testes cancer.

Sequentially: in a row.

Software: computer program.

Somnolence: sleepiness.

Spiromete: an instrument to measure the amount of air taken into and exhaled from the lungs.

Standard of Care: treatment plan which the majority of the medical community would accept as appropriate.

Staging: a determination of the extent of the disease.

Stenosis narrowing of a duct, tube, or one of the heart valves.

Stomatitis mouth sores: inflammation of the mouth.

Stratify: arrange in groups for analysis of results (e g , Stratify by age, sex, etc).

Stupor: stunned state in which it is difficult to get a response or the attention of the subject.

Subclavian: under the collarbone.

Subcutaneous: under the skin.

Supine: lying on the back.

Supportive care: general medical care aimed at symptoms, not intended to improve or cure underlying disease.

Symptomatic: having symptoms.

Syndrome: a condition characterized by a set of symptoms.

Systolic: top number in blood pressure; pertaining to contraction phase of heart beat.

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T

Teratogenic: capable of causing malformations in unborn fetuses.

Testes: male sex glands; male organs which produce sperm.

Thrombosis: blood clotting within blood vessels.

TID: three times a day.

Titration: gradual alteration of drug dose to determine desired effect or most beneficial strength of drug.

T-lymphocytes: type of white blood cells involved in immune reactions.

Topical surface: on the skin.

Topical Anesthetic: applied to certain area of the skin to reduce pain to specific (limited) area to which applied.

Toxicity: side effects or undesirable effects of a drug.

Transdermal: through the skin.

Transiently: temporarily.

Trauma injury: wound.

Treadmill: walking machine often used to determine heart function.

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U

Uptake: absorption and incorporation of a substance by living tissue; absorb and incorporate a substance, taking in of a substance by living tissue.

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V

Valvuloplasty: plastic repair of a valve, especially of the heart.

Varices: enlarged veins, usually in legs or lining of tube between mouth and stomach.

Vasospasm: narrowing of blood vessels due to spasm of vessel walls.

Vector: a carrier, usually an insect, that carries and transmits disease-causing microorganisms.

Venipuncture: entering vein with a needle, generally through the skin.

Vertical Transmission: spread of disease.

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W

WBC: white blood cell.